

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL  
PRELIMINARY SCREENING COMMITTEE  
Thursday, August 25, 2016**

Attachment: 160825 FINAL City Manager Search REVIEWED (2023-CCH-1 : Minutes of the Cambridge City Council Preliminary Screening

The Preliminary Screening Committee, appointed by Mayor E. Denise Simmons, and charged with assisting the City Council with the process of selecting a new City Manager held a meeting on Thursday, August 25, 2016 at the Sonesta Hotel, 40 Edwin Land Boulevard, Cambridge, MA beginning at 9:15 a.m. in the Riverfront Room.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the applications that have been submitted to the City’s search consultants GovHR; select a group of candidates who will be interviewed by the committee on September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>; and develop a series of questions that will be asked of candidates. In addition, the committee will select an individual(s) to serve as Chair(s) of the committee. Due to the highly confidential nature of the process and in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the committee will convene in a public meeting and is expected to vote to move into executive session for significant portions of the meeting.

Present at the meeting were Councillor David Maher, Councillor Leland Cheung, Councillor Nadeem Mazen, Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., Sheila Keady-Rawson, Director of Personnel, Peter Traversy, Elaine Thorne, Laura Booth, Jay Kiely, Patrick Magee, Richard Harding, School Committee Member, Gerald Reardon, Chief of the Cambridge Fire Department, Fred Fantini, School Committee Member, Claude Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer, Cambridge Public Health Department, Susan Schlesinger, Kevin Casey, Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Susan Connelly, Elaine DeRosa, Reverend Lorraine Thornhill, Heidi Voorhees, President, Joellen Earl, Chief Executive Officer, GovHR USA, Arthur Goldberg, Deputy City Solicitor, Sandra Albano, Executive Assistant to the City Council, and Paula M. Crane, Deputy City Clerk.

The meeting convened at 9:15 a.m.

Paula M. Crane, Deputy City Clerk, read the Call of the Meeting and noted that the first order of business is that the Preliminary Search Committee must elect a Chair or Co-Chairs of the Committee.

Councillor Toomey nominated Councillor David Maher as Chair of the Committee as he has been the person who has spearheaded this process. Mr. Fantini nominated Sheila Keady-Rawson as Co-Chair of the Committee.

The question now came on the nominations and the roll was called and resulted as follows:

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|-------|---|-----|
| YEAS: | Mr. Traversy, Ms. Thorne, Ms. Booth,<br>Mr. Kiely, Mr. Magee, Mr. Harding,<br>Mr. Reardon, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Jacob<br>Ms. Schlesinger, Mr. Casey, Ms. Semonoff,<br>Ms. Connelly, Ms. DeRosa, Reverend<br>Thornhill, Councillors Maher, Mazen<br>and Toomey | -18 |
| NAYS: | None  | -0  |

ABSENT: Councillor Cheung -1

and the nomination was –

Adopted.

Councillor Maher stated that the Cambridge has had good fortune of having two longstanding City Managers for over 35 years. He said that this is the first time that the City has been in the position to conduct a search such of this. He explained that they looked at the School Committee search process and modeled this process around that formula. He noted that a committee was appointed by the City Manager which looked at hiring an outside search firm to conduct the search and GovHR was awarded the contract.

Councillor Maher noted that the Preliminary Screening Committee could not include more than four City Councillors due to the Open Meeting Law.

Councillor Maher introduced Heidi Voorhees, President, and Joellen Earl, Chief Executive Officer, Of GovHR USA, to give an overview of the candidate outreach process.

Ms. Earl stated that they spent eight days in Cambridge and worked with a dedicated website. She said that they gathered information and developed a recruitment profile which is what was used to solicit candidates. She noted that the position was advertised in many advertising sources for a 4-week period in July. Ms. Voorhees noted that they conducted a Facebook push and hit approximately 20,000 locations which was very successful. Ms. Voorhees noted that social media was used effectively. Ms. Earl stated that they conversed and networked with many different people and noted that there were 26 applicants the week before the closing date. She stated that there were 55 applications received by the final closing date.

Ms. Earl explained that once resumes were received, she and Ms. Voorhees reviewed the resumes and chose 16 applicants to vet further. She noted that this process entailed a Skype interview which lasted at least one hour. She noted that in addition, there were two reference checks for each candidate. She said that preliminary background screening was also conducted. She said that each applicant was media searched along with the review of paperwork supplied by the applicants to determine if there was anything problematic in their background. As a result of this work, a recruitment portfolio was compiled. Ms. Earl and Ms. Voorhees stressed that when candidates are discussed it must be confidential. She noted that there are two tiers of candidates with eight in each tier. She added that all of the candidates are qualified to be the City Manager of Cambridge.

Councillor Maher thanked Ms. Earl and Ms. Voorhees for their remarks and made the motion to move into executive session at 9:33 a.m.

The question now came on the motion to move to executive session and the roll was called and resulted as follows:

YEAS: Mr. Traversy, Ms. Thorne, Ms. Booth,  
Mr. Kiely, Mr. Magee, Mr. Harding,

Mr. Reardon, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Jacob  
Ms. Schlesinger, Mr. Casey, Ms. Semonoff,  
Ms. Connelly, Ms. DeRosa, Reverend  
Thornhill, Councillors Maher, Mazen  
and Toomey -18

NAYS: None -0

ABSENT: Councillor Cheung -1

and the motion was –

Adopted.

Ms. Connelly asked what is the goal of the meeting. Councillor Maher stated that the goal is to take the group of candidates and to come up with a list of those that the group will interview on September 12 and September 13, 2016. He said that the number of interviewees should be a reasonable number, between 7-9. He noted that the charge of the committee is to pick applicants for the interview process and then to narrow that number to a field of 3-4 people who will advance to the full City Council for consideration. He added that questions to the interviewees will be discussed in open session.

Ms. Schlesinger asked if it is a diverse pool of applicants and Ms. Voorhees responded that the pool represents the state of the profession as it is an overwhelmingly white male profession. She stated that this is typical if the numbers are tracked.

Mr. Fantini asked if there are many open positions in Massachusetts for a City Manager. Ms. Earl responded that there are a few, but added that Cambridge is in a different league. She said that there are current City Managers that would not apply for the job as they are happy where they are currently or the timing is not right.

Councillor Maher added that when the national search was conducted for the new Superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools, they made the effort to find the most diverse pool of candidates. He noted that all three of the finalists for that position were people of color, and came from Cambridge’s own back yard.

Jay Kiely asked about process in developing the specifications for the City Manager job itself. Councillor Maher stated that the City Council was looking to have as transparent a process as possible. He noted that there were 27 constituency-based focus groups, meetings with 24 key personnel, two drop-in sessions at City Hall, two citywide general sessions, and a Cambridge dedicated e-mail regarding this topic with only 20 e-mails received. He noted that there was an on-line survey for employees in addition to comment cards available at City Hall. Councillor Maher asserted that the goal was to ensure that a good cross-section of opinions were received.

The Committee then began the process of reviewing the candidates with the view of narrowing the field of candidates.

The Committee adjourned for a break at 12:15 p.m.

The Committee re-convened at 12:53 p.m.

Councillor Maher stated that it is best to move multiple people forward in the process in order to have enough candidates that will pass muster.

Councillor Maher stated that the interviews will take place over a two-day period and the Committee will have time to evaluate the candidates and then recommend the top candidates to the full City Council.

Ms. Schlesinger asked if there will be uniform scoring matrix. Ms. Earl responded that there will be evaluation sheets to aid in this process.

Peter Traversy asked if there is data that suggests that it is important to have a certain type of work experience to be a good City Manager. He questioned if people with City government experience are better-suited for this type of position. Ms. Voorhees responded that this position is unlike any other and explained that because Cambridge is on a different level, it would be a significant change for someone who is not familiar with City administration.

Councillor Maher stated that after careful consideration and discussion, it appears that the consensus of the group is that there are 8 candidates who should move forward in the process. He made a motion to forward eight candidates to the interview process.

The question now came on the motion and the roll was called and resulted as follows:

YEAS:	Mr. Traversy, Ms. Thorne, Ms. Booth, Mr. Kiely, Mr. Magee, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reardon, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Jacob Ms. Schlesinger, Mr. Casey, Ms. Semonoff, Ms. Connelly, Ms. DeRosa, Reverend Thornhill, Councillors Cheung, Maher, Mazen and Toomey	-19
NAYS:	None	-0
ABSENT:	None	-0

and the motion was –

Adopted.

Councillor Maher made a motion to adjourn executive session at 2:08 p.m.

The question now came on the motion and the roll was called and resulted as follows:

YEAS:	Mr. Traversy, Ms. Thorne, Ms. Booth, Mr. Kiely, Mr. Magee, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reardon, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Jacob Ms. Schlesinger, Mr. Casey, Ms. Semonoff,
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Ms. Connelly, Ms. DeRosa, Reverend Thornhill, Councillors Cheung, Maher, Mazen and Toomey -19

NAYS: None -0

ABSENT: None -0

and the motion was –

Adopted.

Councillor Maher stated that the work of the Preliminary Screening Committee will remain confidential. He stated that interviews with the candidates will take place on September 12 and September 13, 2016. He stated that there will most likely be a period of a few days before the release of the finalists’ names.

Ms. Voorhees stated that many of her clients begin the interview process with an oral presentation by the candidate. She said that this is beneficial because it gives a sense of a person’s platform skills. She suggested that this oral presentation could cover a topic of significance to Cambridge.

At this time, Ms. Voorhees and Ms. Earl provided the Committee with suggested interview questions. **(ATTACHMENT A)**

Ms. Schlesinger stated that she thinks it is important to aggregate some questions around income inequality, affordable housing, and maintenance of diversity. She said that she would like the candidates to know that these are important issues in the City.

Ms. Earl stated that she and Ms. Voorhees would welcome feedback to develop a master list of questions for the finalists.

Mr. Harding stated that everyone should be given #1 question globally. Councillor Maher stated his agreement. He suggested that the first question should be regarding the vision of Cambridge moving forward.

Mr. Fantini asked how many questions should be asked of the finalists. Ms. Voorhees responded that it is possible to go through 20 questions and answers in a one-hour timeframe. Ms. Keady-Rawson stated that 20 questions may be a lot of questions if you want to probe deeper into some of the responses. She said that 15 questions would allow for follow-up. Ellen Semonoff advocated for fewer questions, leaving more time for follow-up.

Councillor Maher asked if it would be helpful for Ms. Earl and Ms. Voorhees to know the top 10 areas of interest that the Committee would like to hear from the applicants. He stated that the Committee would like questions surrounding topics such as public safety, management of growth in the city, creation of income diversity, thoughts on the Global Smart City Initiative, regional cooperation with other cities and towns; development and its challenges in the City, management and leadership style, experience in developing relationship with not-for-profit organizations, and balancing the business community with the residential community.

Councillor Toomey stated that it is important to have a City Manager who has the ability to say “no” to the City Council at times. Susan Connelly stressed the importance of managing a City Council that has diverse opinions while also protecting day-to-day operations of City government.

Councillor Mazen stated that there is difference between swinging between whims and the clear majority of the City Council that wants to get something done. He said if there is lack of consensus, it is a different problem. Mr. Harding stated that his question is weighted less on the political environment but more about understanding the financial stability and the move toward growth.

Ms. Schlesinger stated that there should be a question about environmental sustainability. She added that town/gown relations are also important. She stated that although the City Manager does not run the school system, it is important to have some question about Cambridge schools included.

Councillor Maher stated that outreach is of major importance to him. He stated that a good question would be how residents of Cambridge can be reached in order to engage all socioeconomic classes.

Councillor Maher stated that although the Committee will ask the questions, there will be other opportunities for questions to be asked. He noted that the City Council will also conduct their own interviews with the finalists and the finalists will also be presented in the public forum. He said that the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions of the finalists.

Mr. Harding stated that it is important to ask the finalists about their thoughts on small businesses in the city. Mr. Magee stated his agreement.

Councillor Mazen stated that another important issue to consider inquiring about is corporate support. Ms. Schlesinger stated her agreement, noting that the City is focused on continuing a thriving commercial business while creating benefits for people in the community. She noted that most City Managers do not have experience in this area.

Ms. Semonoff stated the importance of ensuring that the Committee give the City Council the top three candidates and it is important to ask the questions that will determine the candidates that will be sent forward.

Chief Reardon stated that it is important to keep the candidates on-point throughout the interview process.

Susan Connelly noted that the last two City Managers had incredibly strong fiscal skill sets. She questioned if this skill set, going forward, would be covered by others in a different way. Councillor Maher responded that in the 1970's, the City was not in good shape but as things have become much more stable, it is easy to take this fiscal stability for granted. Chief Reardon stated that any department head should know his or her budget as it is incredibly important. Councillor Mazen stated that it is safe to say that both of the former City Managers had fiscal responsibility but they did not have the same level of fiscal conservatism. Councillor Toomey stated that fiscal stability determines what type of city Cambridge will be. He said that with stability, the dynamic and demographics of the city will change. He stated that there must be balance.

Chief Reardon stated that it is important to be cognizant of the fact that if we get to a point where taxes are not worth the benefits, there is competition to steal businesses away from the city.

Ms. Schlesinger asked Ms. Earl and Ms. Voorhees if there are any questions that would give the Committee a different view of a candidates. Ms. Earl stated that there are more self-reflection type of questions. Ms. Voorhees stated that she likes the question regarding conflict and how it was resolved in any situation. She noted that any question that asks for specific examples of how a candidate responds to said challenge is beneficial.

Jay Kiley stated that he wants to be in a position that he feels good about the three finalists that will be presented to the City Council.

Councillor Maher stated that another area of questions should be about community and public health as it relates to the broader socioeconomic issues facing some of the communities in the city.

Mr. Harding stated that there are many people that might not see the “new Cambridge” as a good thing. He said that older families don’t always see the same outlook and potential because the change itself is threatening. He said that a new City Manager must understand the neighborhoods and culture.

Jay Kiely suggested adding a question about the opioid epidemic as it affects safety, schools, public health, and quality of life.

Ms. Earl stated that she and Ms. Voorhees will re-formulate questions with the top 15 topics and try to combine some of the ideas into the questions.

Councillor Maher asked the Preliminary Screening Committee members if they would like to ask the questions during the interviews or is it the desire to have Ms. Earl and Ms. Voorhees ask the questions. The consensus of the members indicated that Ms. Earl and Ms. Voorhees will ask the questions and the members of the Preliminary Screening Committee will ask follow-up and more in-depth questions.

Ms. Semonoff questioned if any more information on the candidates will be forthcoming. Ms. Voorhees responded that all information regarding the candidates has been given to the Committee members.

Councillor Maher stated that site visits are another tool that can be utilized by the City Council.

Councillor Maher extended the thanks of the Committee to Ms. Earl and Ms. Voorhees. He thanked the members for their time and input into the process.

Councillor Maher made the motion to adjourn at 3:12 p.m.

On a voice vote, the motion passed.

For the Committee,

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Councillor David Maher, Co-Chair  
Preliminary Screening Committee

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Sheila Keady-Rawson, Co-Chair  
Preliminary Screening Committee